

## **Dr. Colleen B. Walton**

304 Meeker Ave.  
Newark, NJ 07112

Phone (973) 923 - 7980  
Fax (973) 923 - 2556

August 13, 1997

Mr. Charles Bishop  
Chief Inspector  
Department of Inspections  
City Hall Room 402  
920 Broad St.  
Newark, NJ. 07102

Dear Mr. Bishop,

At the request of Mr. Phillip Grate, Sr., I visited his apartment complex and found certain alarming existing conditions. The apartment complex includes 260 -270 -280 Morris Ave. and 165 - 175 - 185 Bruce St.. Mr. Grate Sr. contacted me at the DOH regarding conditions at the above-referenced housing complex that he felt posed an immediate danger to the safety, health and welfare of the residents; of which a large proportion are children.

On August 12, 1997, I conducted a survey of the above-mentioned complex. Mr. Grate, Sr. accompanied me on the survey. The complex, built approximately 22 years ago, faces Morris Ave. and Bruce St.. It is a rather compacted site with interior court yards. The buildings are brick exterior clad in brick. The buildings are connected by a series of interior open balconies fronting in the courtyards. The buildings consist of several levels of reinforced load bearing masonry walls/pre-cast plank structural concrete. On my walk with Mr. Grate, Sr., although the exterior of the complex did not show any signs of deterioration, he pointed out, and I observed, what appears to be serious and obvious structural and architectural deteriorations within the complex:

### **STAIRWAYS**

1. The stairways consist of metal pan/concrete-filled treads; structural steel channel stringers. Throughout the complex, the metal pans and structural steel supports are deteriorated and showing what appears to be signs of structural failure; separation of steel delamination, cracks and general spalling of concrete. In some cases, the stairs have already collapsed.
2. In many of the stairwells, the handrails and guardrails are missing. Where present, the guardrails do not appear to comply with the guidelines; thereby permitting small children to fit their bodies through the openings which exceed the maximum size allowed by law.

### **BALCONIES**

The balcony structural system consists of reinforced concrete planks with ends supported by structural steel angles welded to concrete-filled lolly columns. The balconies are showing signs of settlement and movement. It also appears that the concrete planks did not seem to be bearing properly on the steel/load-bearing wall supports. According to Mr. Grate, Sr., some of the balconies have already collapsed; evident from the remedial repairs that have been done.

### **ELEVATOR/STAIR CORE**

The load-bearing masonry walls have numerous compression and shear cracks. This was particularly noticeable where the concrete and steel supports bear on the walls.

### **EXPOSED ELECTRICAL WIRING**

Mr. Phillip Grate, Sr. pointed out, and I observed numerous exposed wiring. According to Mr. Grate Sr., these wires are live.

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It is my understanding that facilities, such as this, must comply with the New Jersey Uniform Construction Code and other life/safety guidelines. It is obvious, even to a lay person, as I am, that this facility poses a direct threat to the safety, health and well-being of every resident and visitor.

It is my strong recommendation that the proper agency conduct an independent survey as soon as possible and report the findings with corrective recommendations. The above-mentioned problems are a disaster waiting to happen. Thank you for your attention to this matter. You can reach me at 733 5129.

Sincerely yours,

*Dr. Colleen B. Walton*  
Dr. Colleen B. Walton

\* Also an assessment of lead and asbestos if not done -  
if <sup>entity</sup> ~~project~~ built before 1978